

Brooklyn Agricultural Commission

Tuesday April 28, 2015

7.00 PM

Town Hall

Present: Lou Brodeur, Sandy Brodeur, Charles Langevin, Stanley Karro, and Joyce Meader. Sally Timmons joined the meeting at 7:12 PM.

S. Karro *motioned* to approve the March 24, 2015 meeting minutes amended to identify the name of the conference that L. Brodeur and S. Brodeur attended: Harvest New England. S. Brodeur *seconded*. *All in favor; motion carried.*

Public Participation: None

Old Business:

Brooklyn Farmers Brochure: J. Meader stated that the new deadline for participation is May 1. Mansfield and Hampton have elected to participate. The cost per town will be less than \$500.

Family Fun Day: S. Timmons and S. Brodeur will manage this event. They will need brochures for the display table.

S. Brodeur discussed the National Wildlife Federation's (NWF) Butterfly Hero Campaign to help save the monarch butterfly. Those who submit a photo of their child making the international sign language sign of the butterfly to the NWF website will receive a free kit which includes milkweed seeds. J. Meader stated that milkweed is poisonous to livestock. S. Brodeur noted that because farms have become fewer and less weedy, the monarch butterfly population has been negatively impacted. S. Timmons remarked that habitat loss in overwintering sites has also negatively impacted the monarch butterfly population.

S. Timmons inquired whether vegetable painting should still be planned as a kids' activity. S. Brodeur thinks it is a good idea. S. Timmons will ask the Recreation Department how to get a space. The Committee discussed whether to request an indoor or outdoor location. The decision was made to ask for an outdoor location and to set up a pop up tent. J. Meader suggested handing out the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's farmers' market brochures.

Committee report for "History of Agriculture in Brooklyn:" S. Karro stated that there was no update. He requested blank maps from Land Use Administrator Jana Butts Roberson and has begun mapping out the farms.

Presentation by Land Use Administrator Jana Butts Roberson: J. Roberson discussed the mapping resources that are available to the Town with regard to farmland soils, wetlands, and existing agricultural land. She reviewed the three types of farmland soil: Prime, Important, and Locally Important. The Town has identified its Locally Important lands. This information was

useful to the Town when considering the acquisition of Barrett Hill Farm. She presented a map of the Town's farmland soils.

She noted that wetlands and farmland soils are not mutually exclusive. She further noted that sometimes there is a conflict between wetlands regulations and the use of farmers' land for agricultural purposes. She stated that many agricultural activities are permitted as of right in wetlands. She reviewed the lists of activities that are permitted as of right and those that require a permit. With regard to forestry activities, they do not usually require a wetlands permit; however, Inlands Wetlands (IW) must be notified of the proposed activity, which must be performed by a licensed professional. IW has the right to review the proposed activity and perform a site walk.

J. Roberson noted that if anyone is concerned about whether a proposed activity requires a permit, they can ask for a declaratory ruling by IW. There is no application fee. She noted that IW reviews applications for a declaratory ruling on a case by case basis. IW does not focus on normal agricultural activities that have no negative impact on the environment. If a permit is required, there are three types: 1) Action by Duly Authorized Agent (review by J. Roberson and IW Chair); 2) regular IW permit; and 3) IW permit with significant activity (requires public hearing.)

J. Roberson presented a map entitled Community Co-Occurring Resource Inventory. This overlay analysis provides a tool for prioritizing resources. The darkest green areas represent those areas with the greatest diversity of resources. The yellow areas, which need to be updated, represent permanently protected and municipal open space.

J. Roberson presented several publications that may be of interest to the Commission: 1) Best Management Practices for Water Quality While Harvesting Forest Products (DEEP); 2) Good Horse Keeping (HEAP); 3) Agriculture and Forestry and Wetlands Protection in Connecticut (DEEP); 4) Guidance and Recommendations for Connecticut Municipal Zoning Regulations and Ordinances for Livestock (NRCS); and 5) Planning for Agriculture – A Guide for Connecticut Municipalities (American Farmland Trust and Connecticut Conference of Municipalities).

J. Roberson stated that the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) is going to be updating its regulations. One of the topics that has been broached is the fact that agriculture is not permitted in the high density R-30 and R-10 zones. There is a lot of discussion about backyard chickens. S. Timmons feels the Commission should form an opinion on backyard chickens and whether they are appropriate in these zones.

S. Karro inquired about forestry trends. L. Brodeur noted that with programs such as the one offered by NRCS, more forestry activities are being performed by professionals rather than landowners themselves. J. Roberson stated that forestry management plans are site specific and reflect the landowner's goals. She noted that it was not until 1991 that DEEP required that forestry activities be conducted by certified forest practitioners. There are three types of certification: 1) Forester; 2) Supervising Forest Products Harvester; and 3) Forest Products Harvester. S. Karro noted that insect infestation issues play a role in planning forestry activities. The Commission briefly discussed its experiences with the USDA's program to protect the New England cottontail's habitat.

J. Roberson suggested that the Commission write to the PZC regarding agricultural signage. The Commission agreed to review the existing regulations and come up with suggestions for the PZC.

L. Brodeur thanked J. Roberson for her presentation

New Business:

Walktober: The deadline to submit a walk is May 1. L. Brodeur and S. Brodeur will hold a walk this year. Ann Ennis of Kingswood Farms will also hold a walk.

Correspondence: J. Meader stated that the Wolf Den Land Trust will be holding a walk behind her house on May 30 from 9:30 to 1. The discussion will center on the Trust's forest management plan. S. Timmons will put this information on the Commission's Facebook page.

*S. Karro **motioned** to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 PM. S. Brodeur **seconded**. All in favor; motion carried.*

Next meeting May 26, 2015

Sincerely,

Shelley Hopkins, Recording Secretary